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Identical letters dated 13 February 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

I am writing to draw your attention to an alarming statement made by the President of Lebanon, Michel Aoun. In his statement, the President expressed support for the military build-up of Hezbollah, an internationally designated terrorist organization.

In an interview held yesterday, 12 February 2017, President Aoun stated that "as long as the army is not powerful enough to face Israel, we feel the need to maintain Hezbollah's weapons. These weapons complement the action of the army".

It is evident from this statement that the Lebanese Government is not only failing to fulfil its obligations under Security Council resolutions 1701 (2006) and 1559 (2004) but is actively encouraging and legitimizing Hezbollah's activity, which clearly violates these resolutions.

The Security Council, in resolution 1701 (2006), required "the disarmament of all armed groups in Lebanon, so that ... there will be no weapons or authority in Lebanon other than that of the Lebanese State".

In the 10 years since the adoption of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006), Hezbollah has amassed over 150,000 rockets and missiles, and has positioned its arsenal in the midst of the civilian population in southern Lebanon.

The previous Secretary-General stated in his report on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) that "the maintenance of arms by Hezbollah and other groups outside the control of the State continues to contradict the country's obligations under resolutions 1559 (2004) and 1701 (2006)".

Furthermore, by claiming that Hezbollah's weapons are complementary to those of the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF), the President of Lebanon is providing a further example of the growing cooperation between Hezbollah and the Lebanese Armed Forces. This is a concerning trend which the international community should act to prevent.

The international community must send a clear message to the Government of Lebanon and to all its institutions regarding their obligation to implement Security Council resolutions.

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I call on the Security Council to publicly condemn this outrageous statement and to demand that the Government of Lebanon uphold its commitments and fully implement Security Council resolutions 1701 (2006) and 1559 (2004).

Only the full implementation of these resolutions can ensure security and stability in the Middle East.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter distributed as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Danny **Danon**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative